

bones what he said when he announced his retirement from the Senate. "Despite all our problems—despite our sometimes inefficient bureaucracies . . . and all of the other problems we love to complain about—this is still the greatest nation in the history of the world, and still a shining beacon of hope and opportunity."

In July 1969, as the crew of the Apollo 11 prepared for lift-off, Esther Goddard was speaking to an AP reporter. She read these words from the diary of her late husband, Robert Goddard, "the father of American rocketry." "When old dreams die, new ones come to take their place. God pity a one-dream man." Tonight, I thank God for giving us John Glenn. By having the courage to live his many dreams, he gives us the courage to live our own. Thank you, John. Thank you, Annie. Godspeed to you both.

CONFERENCE DELIBERATIONS ON H.R. 3108

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, on Thursday, February 12, 2004, the Senate appointed conferees on the pension bill, H.R. 3108.

The legislation, as amended, passed on January 28 on an overwhelming 86-9 vote.

Of course, the regular order on a bill of this type would have been to insist on the Senate position and appoint conferees to begin negotiations with the House over the contents of this bill. Normally, this would have occurred without comment immediately after passage of the legislation.

Sadly, that was not the case.

Instead, the Senate was diverted into an argument over past patterns and practices—how many times a bill has gone to conference, or been pre-conferenced, or simply agreed to by the other body or who has been at what meeting, when, or where. This argument may mean much to a few, but it stood in the way of the many.

The Senate and the House are different institutions, with different rules, different pressures, different Members, and different outlooks. The most reasonable way for them to blend these differences is together, with representatives from both bodies sitting down at a table, reconciling legislation that each House has endorsed as its best idea to resolve pressing national problems.

The pension legislation passed both the House and the Senate with large bipartisan majorities. In the Senate, the legislation was developed over 3 months with bipartisan input from across the ideological and party spectrum. Both leaders, as well as the chairmen and ranking members of the HELP and the Finance Committee, wrote the bill, negotiated with multiple interested members, and spearheaded the legislation to passage.

When it came to the pension legislation, I listened carefully to what the minority leader said in various statements. I was gratified by the leader's assurance, given on the floor February 4, that he was "not asking for any predetermined outcome," and that he was "not asking for a certain set of expecta-

tations with regard to the legislation itself." Such an expectation on the part of any Member would have been another sharp departure about how we do our work here.

It was the regular order that we go to conference on this legislation. I also believe it is the regular order that Senate conferees, majority and minority, participate in conference deliberations as compromise between the House and Senate is developed.

I will work with my Senate majority colleagues to validate this commitment. We should not stymie over process when there is so much substance for us to work on, together, as the year progresses.

THE POLITICIZATION OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I rise today to bring to the Senate's attention a speech given by Ambassador Thomas Pickering in which he addressed some important issues concerning the Foreign Service.

I had the privilege of hearing this speech during an event at the Smithsonian last year, and I know of no one better qualified to talk about the Foreign Service than Ambassador Pickering. In over 41 years in the Foreign Service, Thomas Pickering served as ambassador to a dizzying number of important countries and international organizations, including Russia, India, Israel, Nigeria, and the United Nations. He also happens to speak 5 foreign languages.

In his speech, Ambassador Pickering warns of the increasing politicization of the Foreign Service. He points out that after disastrous experiences in the Civil War and Spanish-American War, the United States military professionalized its officer corps. Today, with the rise of international terrorism and the proliferation of other complex international problems, we should be thinking along the same lines.

However, we seem to be going in the wrong direction. Increasingly, individuals who have done little more than donate to a political campaign are being placed into key positions within the State Department. Ambassador Pickering appropriately points out that certain political appointees have and will continue to play an important role in pursuing U.S. diplomatic efforts overseas. Bringing individuals like Howard Baker and Felix Rohatyn, who possess unique skills, to the State Department is essential.

But the world is becoming more interconnected and more dangerous. International crises no longer confine themselves to remote corners of the world. For example, the outbreak of a deadly disease in Africa is only a plane ride away from the United States. We need seasoned, talented individuals capable of effectively advancing U.S. interests in key positions in Washington and abroad—not individuals whose primary talent is digging into their pockets to donate to a political campaign.

I urge all Senators to heed Ambassador Pickering's address and ask unanimous consent that the entire speech be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY'S PAUL PECK
PRESIDENTIAL AWARD—ACCEPTANCE SPEECH
BY AMBASSADOR THOMAS R. PICKERING

Thank you very much for the kind introduction. I am grateful to Strobe Talbott for his very kind remarks. Thank you too for this extremely generous and most unexpected award. I want to extend my warmest congratulations to Diana Walker, my co-recipient tonight, for her great contribution to portraying the presidency. I look forward to doing more television shows together.

I am even more grateful for this award, given my distinguished predecessors in receiving it, one of whom, General Brent Scowcroft, is here tonight, and the high respect I have for the members of the selection committee.

Let me also thank Mr. Peck for his unstinting generosity to the Portrait Gallery, the Presidency and to the pursuit of educational opportunities for disadvantaged Americans, including African Americans and Hispanics and many others. Your willingness to support so generously such worthy and deserving causes is more than admirable. Were I not a recipient of the award tonight, I would say with equal vigor "thank you for doing this for your country and its future." I want too to thank all the cooperating foundations and organizations that made the award and the evening possible.

I would be remiss in my own understanding of reality were I not to say immediately that it has been my family who have been my strongest supporters throughout my career in government. I'm happy to have with me tonight my son Timothy and members of his family, my daughter Margaret and members of her family and most especially my wife Alice. To all of them, but most especially to Alice, my firmest friend and toughest critic through many fascinating assignments, I owe the most, and they too should be receiving the award with me in every sense of the word—they surely deserve it.

I have had the honor of serving every president since Harry Truman, when I worked as a clerk in the U.S. Post Office and for the U.S. Weather Bureau as a summer intern in the Arctic. Since leaving the Foreign Service at the end of 2000, I have also served on a number of official advisory committees to U.S. departments and agencies.

My Foreign Service career was highly rewarding and in some respects, very unusual. I've had the pleasure of serving on all continents except Australia. But then too, I went to university there under the Fulbright program. I also spent three and one-half years in the U.S. Navy and over 41½ in the Foreign Service.

I wallowed in diversity, both ethnic and religious. I had the pleasure of being Ambassador to the world's only Jewish state (Israel); to a Muslim country (Jordan); to the world's largest Hindu state where Buddhism was born and where 150 million are Muslims, which makes it the world's second-largest Muslim state (India); to the largest Orthodox Christian country in the world (Russia); to a predominantly Roman Catholic republic (El Salvador); and to two countries, while still both Christian and Muslim, contain very large populations which practice traditional African religions (Nigeria and Tanzania). It's been a wonderful career, even though my mother often wondered why I kept moving around and couldn't keep a steady job.